

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 SSM-03 /085 W
-----023040 281755Z /50

R 281428Z DEC 77
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9935
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 2247

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS, EG, JO, XF
SUBJECT: NABLUS IS DISAPPOINTED BY ISMAILYIA

REF: JERUSALEM 2236

1. WELL-INFORMED NABLUS UNRWA AREA OFFICER RIDDA TOLD US
DECEMBER 28 THAT GENERAL REACTION IN NABLUS AREA TO
ISMAILYIA SUMMIT WAS ONE OF SEVERE DISAPPOINTMENT. HE
HAD RECENTLY SEEN BOTH HIKMAT AND ZAFIR AL-MASRI, AS WELL
AS OTHER PROMINENT NABLUSIS WHO SUPPORT SADAT INITIATIVE
AND FOUND THEM ALL DISCOURAGED BY BEGIN'S PROPOSALS FOR
WEST BANK AND LACK OF ANY PROGRESS AT ISMAILYIA.

2. DESPITE THIS DISAPPOINTMENT, RIDDA SAID THAT HE
WAS STILL IN FAVOR OF SADAT'S EFFORTS. HE ADMITTED THAT
HE DETECTED THE BEGINNINGS OF POSSIBLE EROSION OF
POPULAR SUPPORT FOR SADAT ON WEST BANK AS RESULT OF
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INADEQUATE ISRAELI RESPONSE. IN ORDER TO PREVENT BREAK-
DOWN IN PEACE EFFORTS, RIDDA THOUGHT THAT ISRAEL MUST
BE MORE FORTHCOMING REGARDING WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN
SELF-DETERMINATION. ALTHOUGH HE RELUCTANTLY CONCEDED
THAT BEGIN'S THINKING HAS EVOLVED SOMEWHAT SINCE ASSUMING
OFFICE, HE QUESTIONED WHETHER IT WOULD ADVANCE FAR
ENOUGH, EVEN DURING NEGOTIATIONS, TO SATISFY PALESTINIAN

NEEDS.

3. HE WAS CRITICAL OF ISMAILYIA DECISION TO HAVE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEET IN JERUSALEM. THIS WOULD MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR JORDAN OR ANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRY TO JOIN THE TALKS EVEN IF THEY CHANGED THEIR INITIAL NEGATIVE STANCE.

4. AS FINAL COMMENT, RIDDA SAID THAT HE FEARED THAT CERTAIN WEST BANKERS MIGHT BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN JERUSALEM POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS. HE THOUGHT THAT ATTEMPTING TO BRING SUCH PALESTINIANS INTO THE MEETING WOULD BE A MISTAKE. IT SEEMED CLEAR FROM HIS MENTIONING THE ISSUE THAT HE HOPED THE U.S. WOULD DO WHATEVER IT COULD TO PREVENT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT; HOWEVER HE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY ASK FOR U.S. TO DO ANYTHING.

5. COMMENT: RIDDA'S COMMENTS CONFIRM REPORTS FROM OTHER WEST BANK SOURCES REGARDING GENERAL NEGATIVE REACTION TO ISMAILYIA INCLUDING EVEN MODERATES SUCH AS FREIJ. AS HINTED BY RIDDA, WE EXPECT THAT SOME WEST BANKERS WILL BEGIN TO SOUR ON THE SADAT INITIATIVE UNLESS THERE ARE SIGNS OF SOME IMPROVEMENT IN PROSPECTS FOR WEST BANK.

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